

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A process for identifying an attention level in an electronic mail item being
2 sent to multiple recipients comprising:

3 creating a list of addresses for said recipients;

4 appending to each of said addresses a tag representing an attention level for
5 said recipients;

6 creating a text message for each of said recipients which includes each of
7 said addresses and the appended tag;

8 forwarding said text message to said recipients; and

9 displaying for each recipient said text message with an attention level
10 indication in response to the tag associated with the recipients address.

1 2. The process for identifying an attention level according to claim 1 further
2 comprising:

3 prompting a user to append said tag to said address when said list is created.

1 3. The process for identifying an attention level according to claim 1 wherein
2 said step of appending said tag to said address comprises:

3 selecting said attention level from a table displayed on a user's display
4 screen; selecting an address from a table containing said address list; and
5 attaching a tag representing said attention level to said selected address.

1 4. The process for identifying an attention level according to claim 1 further
2 comprising attaching a tag representing a default attention level when an attention
3 level is not specified for an address.

1 5. The process for identifying an attention level according to claim 1 further
2 comprising ordering each message to be displayed by a recipient according to said
3 attention level.

1 6. The process for identifying an attention level according to claim 1 further
2 comprising:
3 identifying a specific portion of said text message to be highlighted for a
4 specific address; and
5 attaching a tag to said specific address identifying said highlighted portion
6 of said text.

1 7. The process for identifying an attention level according to claim 6 wherein
2 said step of attaching said tag to said specific address for identifying said
3 highlighted portion of text further comprises displaying a table of said addresses
4 following highlighting of said text; and selecting said address from said table
5 which is to receive said tag identifying said highlighted portion.

1 8. A method for displaying electronic mail messages at a user's display
2 terminal comprising:
3 storing said messages in a memory;
4 sorting said messages in accordance with a tag in each message identifying
5 an attention level for said message; and

6 displaying each of said messages in an order determined from said sorting step.

1 9. A method for displaying electronic messages at a user's display terminal
2 comprising:

3 determining from an tag inserted in a field of said message whether any
4 portion of said message is highlighted; and
5 displaying said message with said portion highlighted.

1 10. The method according to claim 9 wherein said tag is inserted in an address
2 field of said message.

1 11. An electronic mail system for generating mail messages which have an
2 attention level comprising:

3 a computer terminal having a processor which executes an electronic mail
4 program for performing the steps of:
5 composing a mail message for a plurality of addressees;
6 creating a table of addressees to receive the same mail message;
7 identifying in an address field of said same mail message an attention level
8 for each addressee; and
9 transmitting said mail message to said addressees.

1 12. The electronic mail system according to claim 11 wherein said computer
2 program performs the additional steps of:

3 displaying on said computer terminal a pop-up table which identifies each
4 address to which said mail message is directed;

5 displaying on said computer terminal a pop-up table which identifies
6 various attention levels which may be assigned to each addressee; and
7 inserting a tag identifying one of said attention levels in said address field in
8 response to a user selection of one of said addresses and one of said attention
9 levels.

1 13. An electronic mail system for receiving and displaying electronic mail
2 messages comprising:

3 a computer terminal having a processor programmed to perform the steps
4 of:
5 receiving electronic mail messages generated by another computer terminal;
6 storing said electronic mail message in a memory;
7 determining if said message contains a tag identifying an attention level for
8 said message;
9 displaying said attention level with said message.

1 14. The electronic mail system according to claim 13 wherein said processor is
2 further programmed to:

3 sort said messages stored in memory in accordance with said attention level
4 determined for each message; and
5 display said messages in an order determined when said messages are
6 sorted.

1 15. A computer readable medium for storing a program which is executed by a
2 computer system of an electronic mail system, said program executing the steps of:
3 composing a mail message for a plurality of addressees;

4 creating a table of addressees to receive the same mail message;
5 identifying in an address field of said same mail message an attention level
6 for each addressee; and
7 transmitting said mail message to said addressees.

1 16. The computer readable medium according to claim 15 wherein said
2 computer program executes the additional steps of:
3 displaying on said computer terminal a pop-up table which identifies each
4 address to which said mail message is directed;
5 displaying on said computer terminal a pop-up table which identifies
6 various attention levels which may be assigned to each addressee; and
7 inserting a tag identifying one of said attention levels in said address field in
8 response to a user selection of one of said addresses and one of said attention
9 levels.

1 17. A computer readable medium for storing a program which is executed by a
2 computer system of an electronic mail system, said program executing the steps of:
3 receiving electronic mail messages generated by another computer terminal
4 storing said electronic mail message in a memory;
5 determining if said message contains a tag identifying an attention level for
6 said message;
7 displaying said attention level with said message.

1 18. A computer readable medium for storing a program which is executed by a
2 computer system of an electronic mail system of claim 17 wherein said program
3 further executes the steps of:

4 sort said messages stored in memory in accordance with said attention level
5 determined for each message; and
6 display said messages in an order determined when said messages are sorted.

1 19. A computer readable medium for storing a program which is executed by a
2 computer system of an electronic mail system, said program executing the steps of:
3 determining from a tag inserted in a field of said message whether any
4 portion of said message is highlighted; and
5 displaying said message with said portion highlighted.